DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 819 IR 009 200

AUTHOR Duncan, Marvin E.
TITLE Problems Associated with the Professional Preparation of School Media Personnel.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 10p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Certification: Educational Technology: *Employment Qualifications: *Librarians: Library Education: *Media Specialists: *Professional Education

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the professional preparation of media personnel who graduate from separate library and media programs, this paper discusses the confusion which has materialized as a result of the new jargon and terminology used to describe media personnel and the implications of joint certification for the two groups. It is argued that school media personnel need academic preparation in both library science and educational technology in order to carry out their responsibilities, and several suggestions designed to lead to a broader academic preparation for the graduates of separate programs are offered. (MER)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED198819

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION OF SCHOOL MEDIA PERSONNEL

by

Marvin E. Duncan

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Marvin E. Duncan

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

IR009200

"Unpublished"

Marvin E. Duncan, Professor of Education
Director, Learning Resources Center
North Carolina Central University
Durham, North Carolina 27707

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION OF SCHOOL MEDIA PERSONNEL

The current trend in colleges and universities is to combine library and media programs into a unified media experience. Educational Technology/ Media programs are undergoing a physical and curricular metamorphosis. These programs are merging with existing programs in schools of Library Science throughout the United States. For example, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Appliachian State University have combined their library and media programs. Western Carolina University does not have, at the present time, a graduate program in either Library Science or Media but has a combined library-media undergraduate program. Although combining library and media programs is the trend, there are universities which have not combined library and media programs. Even though some of these programs remain separate, potential employers ofttimes do not perceive graduates of these programs as having different competencies and skills.

School principals, business and industry, and professional schools, often look at an individual who received his/her professional preparation in an educational technology or educational media program and one who received his/her professional preparation in a library science program as having the same competencies. This, in fact, is not the case. Due to the recent trend of housing the media center in the school library and changes in nomenclature relative to media specialists, confusion persists regarding who is a media specialist, (librarians are presently referred to as media

coordinators or associate media coordinators) and what competencies that person should possess.

Considerable attention has been devoted to defining the role of the media specialist. (1), (2), (3). I do not wish to add to these discussions nor do I wish to add to the already bulky list of definitions and roles. However, I will operationally define a media specialist as one who does more than "work with media," i.e., threading projectors, making minor equipment repairs or simply working in a setting in which media are stored. A media specialist is an individual who assists teachers in the selection, preparation, integration, utilization, and evaluation of media (print and non-print) to extend the learning capabilities of a target audience.

The purpose of this paper is to bring into sharp focus some of the problems associated with the professional preparation of media personnel. Specifically, this paper addresses (1) the confusion which has materialized as a result of new jargon and terminology describing media personnel and (2) joint certification and implications of joint certification for library and media personnel.

A list of suggestions is also presented which will hopefully assist in (a) eliminating some of the confusion which has evolved as a result of jargon and terminology used to describe media personnel, (b) clarifying the ramifications of joint certification for library and media personnel and (c) planning a more functional graduate program for media personnel. The reader is reminded that the focus of this paper is on the professional preparation of media personnel who graduate from separate library and media programs.

Terminology and Confusion

Literature describing media personnel and their roles is abundant and provides a multiplicity of job titles. Media personnel suffer from, among other things, problems associated with an ever increasing list of job titles. Apparently, titles are changed to keep pace with societal changes. Richard Wynn, in describing these changes, says:

> "This trend from banal to more esoteric job titles has been all about us, even in schools. School librarians have become "instructional materials center coordinators . . ." (4)

This change in titles was perhaps best illuminated by Wynn as: "The esotericism of job titles must be escalated with the rising affluence of society." (5) Audiovisual specialists have evolved into educational technologists with an endless number of descriptors in between. No single group or individual is responsible for the maze in which we find ourselves. All involved in the professional preparation of media personnel are equal partners in the "confusion matrix."

A review of the literature reveals that the title "media specialist" is frequently used to describe media coordinators. While arguments concerning this point may seem trite, careful analysis indicates that it compounds existing confusion. For example, there are authors who use media specialists and media coordinators interchangeably. In North Carolina, individuals whose major academic preparation is in the area of library science are certified as media coordinators. (16) Similarly, those whose major academic preparation is in educational technology or educational media are certified as media specialists (in either television, production or instructional development).

Failure to recognize the differences in academic preparation of the media specialist and the media coordinator and subsequent competencies and skills is also a failure to dichotomize the two areas. Without a doubt, there is more overlap in the tasks performed by media specialists and media coordinators than in previous years. Yet, differences still exist. The librarians' changing role is chronicled in part by Johanna S. Wood who asserted that "school librarians in their roles as media specialists, must possess competencies in media design, development, and evaluation." (6) There is no question as to whether librarians can function effectively and efficiently in the new role. The paramount concern is that librarians in their new roles are referred to as media coordinators, at least in North Carolina since they are certified accordingly, so as to avoid interchangeable use of the terms media specialist and media coordinator. Imagine what would happen if suddenly peaches and nectarines were called by the same name.

Joint Certification for Media Personnel

As mentioned, library education programs and media education programs have merged in many colleges and universities. This merger provides students in the programs with similar curricular experiences. Therefore, joint certification for these students does not pose a problem. However, there are library programs and media programs which remain separate and which continue to provide differing curricular experiences. Joint certification for these individuals creates numerous problems. It is unlikely that students from programs with different thrusts can take and pass the same certification examination. As a member of the National Teachers Examination's Validation Team in 1975, I observed that the majority of the questions on the examination were directly related to library science, which means that students who graduate from educational technology, or educational media programs will be at a dis-

advantage when taking this or a similar examination.

In 1975, a questionnaire was administered to 495 school media specialists throughout the United States in order to assess their judgments and perceptions of the graduate level courses they felt were most appropriate and applicable for managing and operating their school media centers. Among the findings was that:

> Graduate level media programs should offer additional courses in media design and production. Courses that would seem to hold some interest for school media specialists might include (1) advanced media production skills, (2) graphic design and (3) still and motion picture photography. (7)

Library programs which remain separate from educational technology or educational media programs probably do not offer or probably could not offer these courses without major curricular and staff additions. These courses are generally offered in educational technology or educational media programs. Similarly, courses such as storytelling, basic reference materials, and cataloging are recommended for graduate programs in educational technology or educational media. Educational technology or educational media programs which have not combined with library programs probably do not offer or probably could not offer the latter sequence of courses without major curricular or staff additions. The above appears to suggest a merger of all library and educational technology or educational media programs. My position is that merger should take place when more similarities than differences exist between programs, when the two programs have very similar goals and objectives and when the two programs prepare students for similar jobs.

Suggestions

School media personnel need academic preparation in both library science and educational technology if they are to carry out their responsibilities. While these suggestions are intended for media personnel in North Carolina, they may be applicable in other states where library and media programs remain separate and particularly where students from separate library and media programs are required to take the NTE or a similar examination as a part of certification requirements. My suggestions are that:

1. Advisors of students majoring in educational technology or educational media recommend library science to their students as a minor,
2. Advisors of students majoring in library science recommend educational technology or educational media to their students as a minor,
3. An examination be designed for those students who graduate with a major in educational technology or educational media and a minor in library science. The major thrust of the examination should be in the area of media,
4. A different examination be designed for those students majoring in library science with a minor in educational technology or educational media. The major thrust of this examination should be in the area of library science, and
5. A separate examination be designed for those students who graduate with a major in educational technology or educational media and those who graduate with a mjaor in library science when both sets of graduates pursue a minor other than library science and educational technology or educational media respectively. The thrust of these examinations should depend upon the student's major area of concentration.

Hopefully, suggestions one and two will lend to a broader academic preparation for media personnel who graduate from separate library and media programs. These suggestions (one and two) when implemented, should also assist our students in making a higher score on the NTE. Suggestions three,

four, and five pertain directly to certification requirements for media personnel in North Carolina and may be a substitute for the NTE as it is presently structured.

Summary

Literature describing media personnel suggests that a media specialist is an individual who graduates from a library science program and one who graduates from an educational technology or educational media program. The literature is not explicit in making a distinction. The truth of the matter is, particularly in the State of North Carolina, a media specialist is one who graduates from an educational technology or educational media program. A media specialist, in North Carolina, may be certified in either television, production or instructional development. A media coordinator, in North Carolina, is one who graduates from either a combined library-media program or a separate library science program. Perhaps when the difference is realized, confusion relative to terminology will diminish.

Library and media programs which have not combined in their effort to train media personnel are exposing their students to different curricular experiences. These differences present problems regarding certification. Even should the differences in competencies of media specialists and media coordinators be pointed out, certification examinations must be designed to reflect these differences. I believe that the suggestions herein or similar ones will assist greatly in providing a broader academic base for media personnel and will eliminate some of the confusion which surrounds certification requirements for media personnel. Library and media professionals who plan curricular experiences for students for students must stop protecting "DOMAINS" and begin to plan based on the needs of our students.

[1] Marc J. Rosenberg, "What Is The School Media Specialist's Role," Audiovisual Instruction. Vol. 23, No. 2 February, 1978 pp. 12-13.

[2] Anthony L. Belotta "What's A Media Specialist?, Audiovisual Communications. January, 1978, pp. 58-61.

[3] Educational Technology: A Glossary of Terms. AECT Task Force on Definition and Terminology. Published by Association for Educational Communications and Technology. 1979. p 27.

[4] Richard Wynn. "The Wynn Principle," Phi Delta Kappan Vol. LIV, No. 6, February, 1973.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Standards & Guidelines For Approval of Instructions & Programs For Teacher Education. Division of Teacher Education/North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. May 1977 pp. 11-122.

[7] Johanna S. Wood, "The Role of Media Specialists In The Curriculum Process," School Library Journal, Vol. 23, No. 1, September, 1976, p. 20.

[8] Howard G. Ball, "School Media Specialists' Perceptions of Media-Education Programs, The Southeastern Librarian, Vol. XXVI, No. 4, Winter, 1976, pp. 226-29.